

## Indiana University Alumni Newsletter

# P \* H \* I \* L \* O \* S \* O \* P \* H \* Y

Volume XX

College of Arts & Sciences Alumni Association

Summer 2005

## Aesthetics Anarchy Conference

The first Annual Aesthetics Anarchy Conference was held at IU May 13–15. Featured speakers included three from our own department: **Peg Brand**, **Karen Hanson**, and co-organizer **Jonathan Weinberg**. Recent graduate **Joshua Shaw**, PhD'04, now at Penn State Erie, came back to participate. Other speakers came from as far away as the University of Leeds and British Columbia.

The conference was a workshop-style symposium on aesthetics and the philosophy of art. Aesthetics fruitfully intersects with practically every other major subfield

of philosophy, and the conference focused on those interstices. Moreover, while the relationship between aesthetics and the rest of philosophy is often thought of in terms of what those latter areas can bring to aesthetics, symposium participants also investigated ways in which works of art and other aesthetic phenomena may shed light on issues outside the domain of aesthetics.

Some of the many topics covered were aesthetics and cognitive architecture, aesthetics and epistemology, aesthetics and feminism, aesthetics and the law, and aesthetics and fictionalism.

## Two new faculty to join department

**Kate Abramson** is coming to the Department of Philosophy from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she has been assistant professor of philosophy. She received a bachelor's degree from Wellesley College and a PhD from the University of Chicago. There are three major foci of her research: the work of David Hume, contemporary ethics, and the history of modern philosophy (especially the British contribution). She is also interested in philosophical issues concerning feminism and aesthetics.

Her publications include "Hume on Cultural Conflicts of Values," "Correcting Our Sentiments about Hume's Moral Point of View," and "Sympathy and the Project of Hume's Second Enquiry." She is currently at work on a book arguing for a new view of Hume's place in contemporary ethics, focusing on questions of moral judgment, ethical normativity, and moral motivation, as well as a collection for Cambridge University Press of selections from primary sources necessary for understanding the philosophical background for Hume's *Treatise*.

Abramson's work has earned her a number of prestigious grants and fellowships, including an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship for Junior Faculty, a Lawrence S. Rockefeller Visiting Fellowship

at Princeton University's University Center for Human Values, a Franklin Research Grant from the American Philosophical Society, and an American Fellowship from the American Association of University Women, American Fellowship. (This last she declined to accept the Princeton fellowship). Abramson will join the department this fall as assistant professor of philosophy.

**Gary Ebbs** is coming to the department from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he has been associate professor of philosophy. He received a bachelor of arts and a bachelor of music in piano performance from Oberlin College and a PhD from the University of Michigan. Ebbs's work focuses on a group of interconnected topics in the philosophy of language and mind, including rule-following, meaning, the analytic-synthetic distinction, anti-individualism, realism, skepticism, and self-knowledge. He is also interested in (and has written about) the history of analytic philosophy, especially the writings of Frege, Wittgenstein, Carnap, and Quine.

Ebbs is the author of the important and well-received book *Rule-Following and Realism* (Harvard University Press, 1997). His many published articles include "Skepticism, Objectivity, and Brains in Vats," "Realism and Rational Inquiry," and "Can

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## Department sees another Liebmann

Graduate student **Antony Aumann** became the second graduate student in as many years to win the prestigious Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship. **Melissa Seymour**, who won this award last year, has also been given a second year of support from the Liebmann Foundation.

The will of Dolores Zohrab Liebmann created a perpetual charitable trust for the purpose of funding advanced education and graduate study grants, as well as for independent research or study projects. This trust continues her lifetime work of supporting students and educational charitable organizations. Liebmann's concern, as expressed in her will, was to attract and support students with outstanding character and ability who hold promise for achievement and distinction in their chosen fields of study.

There were only 18 Liebmann awardees in the entire country this year, and for two of them to be not only at the same school, but also in the same department is almost unheard of. In fact, Seymour and Aumann are the first two Liebmann scholars ever at Indiana University. Other awardees this year came from Harvard, Northwestern, Yale, and the University of Chicago, among others. Our students are in very distinguished company, indeed!

Aumann came to IU in 2001 after earning his undergraduate degree from Calvin College. His tentative dissertation title is *The Indispensability of Kierkegaard's Theory of Indirect Communication*, and his thesis director is Paul Spade.

Congratulations go to both Aumann and Seymour. The department — and the entire university — is proud of you.

# Around Sycamore

## Faculty news

The faculty of the Department of Philosophy received many awards and honors.

**Sandra Shapshay** was named a Poynter Center faculty fellow for an interdisciplinary seminar on the Ethics and Politics of Childhood. Shapshay teaches ethics and bioethics, and her argument in the seminar was in favor of a moral claim for children to a decent minimum of health care in the United States. She was also invited to be an affiliate faculty member of the IU Center for Bioethics in Indianapolis.

**Kevin Toh** won a prestigious HLA Hart Visiting Fellowship in Ethics and Legal Philosophy. He will be at the University College, Oxford University, next spring. Toh and **Marcia Baron** (along with almost 1,000 other people) attended the XXII World Congress of Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy in Granada Spain. Baron also served as an external reviewer for the University of Helsinki this summer.

**Tim O'Connor** joined the ranks of Department of Philosophy world travelers by going to Venice, Moscow, and Beijing this year. He was also promoted to full professor.

**Karen Hanson** is serving as acting chair of the board of the American Philosophical Association.

**Milton Fisk**, who still hasn't caught on to what retirement means, has written his first book in Spanish, the English title of which is *Public Goods and Radical Justice* (University of Valle Press, Cali, Colombia). He attended the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

**Joan Weiner** has written *Frege Explained* (Open Court Press).

**Peg Brand** reports that she is now at the IUPUI campus. Her address there is Department of Philosophy, CA 344, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Her e-mail remains the same.

## Student news

### Great graduate students

As usual, our graduate students have also accumulated an impressive number of awards and grants in addition to the Liebmann awards described on page 1.

**Alexander Klein** has been awarded the Rodney G. Dennis Fellowship in the Study of Manuscripts from the Houghton Library at Harvard. This will allow him to spend up to four weeks this summer studying at the library. Klein, along with **Melissa Seymour**, also won travel grants from the

College of Arts and Sciences.

**Darren Abramson** won the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award at the Pacific Division meeting of the APA for his paper "Computability Theory and the Philosophy of Mind." Abramson was the third student to receive a College of Arts and Sciences travel grant, and he used his to go to Bangkok for the International Association for Computing and Philosophy, Pacific Division meeting, where he presented another paper, "Hypercomputation With and Without Supertasks."

**Dan Kirchner** has been selected as the university's representative in the graduate student exchange program with the Free University of Berlin. He will be able to study in Berlin for almost a full year.

Last but not least, the departmental awards were as follows:

**Elizabeth Palmer**, Betty Neal Hamilton Award for Scholarly Excellence

**Tony Aumann**, graduate academic excellence

**Chad Gonnerman**, Graduate Oscar R. Ewing Essay Award, for his paper "Relaxing a Purported Tension: Frege, Parsons, and the Concept Horse"

**Chris Tillman**, Outstanding Associate Instructor

**Beth Tropman**, James B. Nelson Dissertation Fellowship

And with what may be the most significant awards of all, several people report that they have new jobs for next year. **Dan Werner** will be at Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y. **Rondo Keele** will be at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La., while **Brian Morton** will be teaching Eastern philosophy at Indiana State University. **Darren Abramson** and **Yuko Murakami** return to their native countries, with Abramson joining the faculty at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, and Murakami going to Chiba University in Japan.

### Stellar undergraduates

Sandra Shapshay, director of undergraduate studies, spoke at the annual spring reception about some of the truly outstanding undergraduate majors currently in the department.

Eleven of our 160 philosophy majors were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa this year. Furthermore, three majors received prestigious College of Arts and Sciences scholarships for academic year 2005-06:

**Alexander Murphy-Nakhnikian** (last year's Biddle Award winner) was named a Beckman Scholar for next year. This schol-

arship award is to support two semesters of study as well as two summers of scientific research. Murphy-Nakhnikian's project involves investigating the etiology of Huntington's Disease.

**Evan Schiffli**, a junior, was awarded the Clevenger Scholarship.

**Gregory Waksmulski**, a junior philosophy and political science major, won the Aulick Scholarship.

Next, Shapshay announced the winners of the annual department awards. The Betty Neal Hamilton Special Award for Scholarly Excellence went to **Marcus Messmer**, a senior philosophy major who already has a BS in mathematics. According to faculty comments Shapshay received, Messmer excels in epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, and philosophy of law.

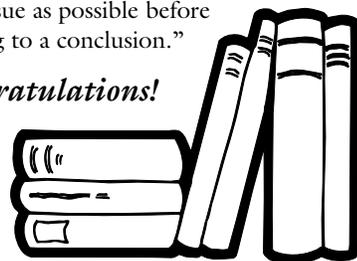
The Undergraduate Excellence Award went to **Thomas Pellman**, a senior with a double major in philosophy and anthropology. He graduated with a 3.94 GPA and is a past holder of the Clevenger Scholarship and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He plans to spend next year teaching English in China.

The Undergraduate Oscar R. Ewing Essay Award went to **James Bourke**, who just graduated with a triple major in philosophy, political science, and an individualized major. His winning essay was titled "Rawls, Pluralism, and the Political." Bourke is pursuing a PhD in political science at Duke University next year.

The final award presented was the Dona Roberts Biddle Award, which honors a major who has combined philosophical studies with community service. This year's winner was **Andrew Gange**, who has spent his time in Bloomington volunteering for a number of environmental and other causes, including INPRIG and the "stop the new-terrain I-69" campaign. He has also raised money for the Shalom Community Center, a local organization that provides basic services for those in need.

In his application, Gange wrote, "Regardless of my own views on issues, my education in philosophy has strengthened my critical eye, and I have learned that it is extremely important to hear as many sides to an issue as possible before jumping to a conclusion."

*Congratulations!*



# Alumni news

In fall 2004, **Curt Baker**, MA'78, wrote, "I'm completing my third year at Florida State University College of Law and am planning to specialize in intellectual-property law." The Tallahassee, Fla., resident can be reached at ircuba@yahoo.com.

**Tracy A. Beckham**, BA'00, has joined Evans & Dixon as an associate in its workers' compensation practice. She holds a doctorate of law from Saint Louis University School of Law and has served as an alumni student recruiter for IU. She lives in St. Louis.

**Maurice A. Cogdell Jr.**, BA'92, started Cogco/Marketing, a medical-services brokerage company, and recently accepted a medical sales position with Stericycle, which offers OSHA- and HIPPA-compliance services. The Lisle, Ill., resident can be reached at usermaclvr@aol.com.

**Elizabeth Donoghue-Armstrong**, BA'96, of Lafayette, Colo., received a PhD in philosophy from the University of Colorado at Boulder. In June 2004 she gave birth to her second daughter, Caroline Siobhan, who joins older sister Grace.

**M. Jayne Fleener**, BA'78, is dean of the College of Education at Louisiana State University. She lives in Baton Rouge, La., and can be reached at fleener@lsu.edu.

**Stephen R. Hicks**, PhD'92, wrote *Explaining Postmodernism* (Scholarly Custom Publishing, 2004). The Roscoe,

Ill., resident is a professor of philosophy at Rockford College.

**Michael Krausz**, MA'67, contributed to and served as the subject of *Interpretation and its Objects: Studies in the Philosophy of Michael Krausz*, published in 2003. The book collects 21 original essays that discuss Krausz's distinctive contribution to the theory of interpretation. The Lewes, Del., resident is the Milton C. Nahm Professor of Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College.

**David P. Polk**, BA'63, and his wife, Kitty M. Polk, BA'83, have moved to North Port on Florida's Gulf Coast after careers in teaching, publishing, and counseling. He is the author of two books, *On the Way to God* and *If Only I Had Known*, and he assembled two music collections for churches, *Chalice Hymnal* and *Chalice Praise*. From 1990 until his retirement in 2003, he was vice president of the Christian Board of Publication and editor in chief of its book imprint, Chalice Press. Previously he was associate professor of practical theology at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University. He can be reached at davidandkittypolk@verizon.net.

**William J. Rapaport**, MA'74, PhD'76, writes, "I'm doing research on a computational theory of contextual vocabulary acquisition — figuring out a meaning for an 'unknown' word from context — and applying this to reading instruction in schools and to philosophical theories

of conceptual-role semantics. I gave a presentation to the International Reading Association in Reno, Nev., in May 2004." He is an associate professor of computer science and an adjunct professor of philosophy for the University at Buffalo. The East Amherst, N.Y., resident can be reached at rapaport@cse.buffalo.edu.

**Bill Robinson**, PhD'66, has published *Understanding Phenomenal Consciousness* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). A professor of philosophy at Iowa State University, he lives in Ames, Iowa.

## New faculty

(continued from page 1)

"We Take Our Words at Face Value?" He is currently at work on a book about anti-individualism that presents a new way of understanding the familiar idea that some radical changes in our beliefs, including certain scientific discoveries, don't change the extensions of our terms. Ebbs is in international demand as a speaker, with lectures to his credit in England, Poland, and China. Ebbs will join the department in the fall of 2006 as professor of philosophy.

## PHILOSOPHY

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COLLEGE

## Department celebrates Margie Clark's 25 years of service to Indiana University

Jan. 20, 2005, was officially declared Margie Clark Day by Mark Kaplan, chair of the Department of Philosophy. It marked Clark's 25 years of service to the university. Ten of those years have been spent in the philosophy department, where Clark has worked with undergraduates, in addition to doing crucial tasks such as payroll and purchasing. Before she came to the philosophy department, Clark worked in the library system and in the real estate office.

Pictures of the event can be found on the philosophy department's Web site, [www.indiana.edu/~phil](http://www.indiana.edu/~phil). Go to "Local Lore," then "Media Gallery," then "Departmental Events." A grand time was had by all! Congratulations, Margie Clark!

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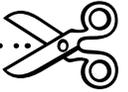
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